

On Your Trip

The big day is finally here. Have you checked all the items in the to-do list under Checkpoints? If yes, grab your journal and you're on your way. You've done all the prep, so now enjoy! Below are some ways to make your trip as enjoyable and meaningful as it can be.

Be a Savvy Traveler

A "tacky tourist" is an insensitive traveler who roams around clueless about the culture she's visiting. If you want to be seen as a "true traveler", keep the following tips in mind.

Word Power

We talk fast and use a lot of slang. Being understood might simply be a matter of slowing down and pulling out the phrase book. Take time to learn a few words in another language like: please, thank you, excuse me, hello, and goodbye. Most people appreciate your effort.

Crank Down the Volume

Everyone likes to have a good time, but if we keep our raucous laughter to the public squares and sidewalks, we're less likely to get glare stare from the mellower locals.

Photo Op

There are plenty of shots you'll want, but there are a few places and people that would rather you didn't click your camera. Most places will display a sign asking you not to shoot, but people may be harder to read. Ask permission before you snap your shot.

What to Wear

If you want to know a country's culture, you'll need to respect its dress codes and modesty norms. So check out its tourism Web sites. Countries where a majority of its citizens are Muslim often consider shorts underwear, and short-shorts or skirts are just not a good idea when traveling overseas.

Street Wear: You might feel more comfortable with a T-shirt and jeans. Black pants travel well and can be dressed up for a night out.

House of Worship Wear: You might find yourself viewing artwork or cool architecture at a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque; some of these places are strict about shorts, bare shoulders, and bellies. Some places even require women to wear dresses, skirts, or a scarf to cover her head. Check out the dress code before you go.

Let Go of the Grump

When you're on the road and away from your favorite food, friends, and music, it's easy to get out of step and be just plain nasty. When that happens, remind yourself: This is your time, how do you want to spend it? Would you rather complain about the weirdness of a place, people, and things or soak them all in and take back the best memories in photos, journals, and stories?

Can't Beat Sleep

Face it, we need it. You made some new travel buddies and you're gonna chat until daybreak. It's all right for one or two nights, especially before the long flight home—who wants to be awake for that? But keep a few hours for primetime shut-eye as there will still be plenty to see and do tomorrow.



Map It: Know where you're going and how to say it in the local lingo.



Progress

18-24 Months

12-16 Months

8-12 Months

3-8 Months

6-8 Weeks

4-6 Weeks

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Stay Safe

**When you're on the road, safety comes first (second and third, too!).
Be one with the safety tips below to make for smooth traveling.**



- Use the buddy system at all times.
Know what to do if you are separated from the group.
- Do not wear your name monogrammed where strangers can see it. It's better to all dress alike with the same color t-shirts, bandanas, or backpacks when visiting crowded areas.
This makes group identification easy.
- Always have an emergency plan.
Be aware of your surroundings at all times to avoid losing track of the larger group.
- Learn how to use a telephone in the country you are visiting. Know how to phone home, the police, or fire department. Every country has its own system for making calls.
- Carry only as much money as you need inside a pocket or money belt. Avoid purses.
Store the rest of your money in the hotel safe.
- Know what to do in case of fire;
make a plan with escape routes for each new place you visit.
- Don't roam the hotel halls alone. Even if you are going to another girl's room, always take a buddy and check with your chaperone before leaving and when you get back. Only open your door to someone you know, never to strangers. Always keep your door locked.
- If carrying a backpack, pin the zipper down with a large safety pin.
It may be a little inconvenient to use, but it will help prevent theft from behind.
- Always be alert and aware of your surroundings. Be careful of laying down packages, backpacks, and purses—while watching entertainment, eating at a restaurant, riding public transportation, etc.
- Don't say your hotel room number out loud in front of strangers.
- Carry identification with you in an inside pocket or money belt.

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Journal Your Heart Out

At the end of each day, find a way to get some you time in. Use it to express your feelings about the day's adventure. The laughs, interesting sights, experiences you felt moved by, and the moments you never want to forget—get it all down.

In addition to journaling, think about how you want to tell the story of your trip. Photos, video, or blog? Perhaps all three. Talk to your group. Perhaps you can all come up with a way to tell your unique story.



You, the Before Picture

Departure time is approaching. How exciting! All those months of planning and preparing have really paid off. Answer the questions below to capture the you pre-trip, recording how you're feeling at this very moment.

What three things are you most excited about?

What three things are you most worried about?

What three things do you predict you'll miss the most about home?

What three things do you think you'll miss the least about home?

My greatest single challenge on this trip will be...

What is the biggest challenge you?

Before You Go Make Sure You Have These Items

- Passport and documents
- Emergency contact info and plan
- Luggage
- Copy of your itinerary
- Stamps if traveling with Gal
- Uniform
- Spending Cash
- Language dictionary

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18 21:45
MSB SVO

A hand-drawn illustration of a pencil with a pink eraser and a sharpened lead tip.

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Global Advocate

As you travel, you may feel inspired by the things you'll see and do. You may even be spurred on to take action to change something. The questions below can help you identify and record things you want to address as Take Action projects back home. Think hard about the questions each day.

Be an Advocate

Questions to help you identify issues to tackle.
Think about places you visited, things you did, and people you saw today.

Did you:

See something you felt "wasn't right" or needed a change?

Come face to face with a community issue that wasn't being addressed?

Learn about an innovative approach to a community issue?



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